

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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An exhibition of sculpture which spans 2500 years of cultural history will open September 24, 1975 at the Cleveland Museum of Art and continue on view through November 16.

Entitled Traditions and Revisions: Themes from the History of Sculpture, its frame of reference is neither period nor style, but rather the motifs, or figural themes, which have engaged the imaginations and sensibilities of sculptors from the earliest times to our own age.

More than a dozen of these basic themes will be examined in the exhibition, among them the nude, the figure in motion, the portrait, the mask, animal imagery, environment, and abstraction.

Sculptural examples, drawn from both Eastern and Western cultures, have been juxtaposed to show the same timeless category as it has been interpreted and reinterpreted by succeeding generations of artists in different parts of the world.

The exhibition includes approximately 120 works, all from the permanent collection of the Cleveland Museum. It has been organized by Gabriel P. Weisberg, the Museum's Curator of Art History and Education, in conjunction with a year-long program on sculpture and its history conducted jointly by the Museum and Case Western Reserve University.

According to Dr. Weisberg, the purpose of the exhibition is to show sculpture in new relationships, removed from cultural-historic contexts, in order to stimulate a re-evaluation of individual pieces on their own terms, and to increase understanding of the broad themes which tie all sculpture together.

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2-traditions and revisions

"For example," he says, "a Greek marble torso of the 6th century B.C. and Richard Hunt's fragmented figure construction of 1963 invite comparison despite their obvious differences, as do a dancing shiva of 11th century India and a Degas sculpture of a dancer dating from the late 19th century."

Another aim of the exhibition, he continues, is to draw visual attention to an appreciation of sculpture as a specific art form, with its own assumptions, and with its own achievements.

A further exploration of the specific qualities which set sculpture apart from the other visual arts is included in the exhibition catalogue prepared by Dr. Weisberg, and to which H. W. Janson, the internationally known art historian, has contributed an introductory essay. Dr. Janson is participating broadly in the joint sculpture program this fall, serving as visiting professor at Case Western Reserve University, and lecturing at the Museum.

In his catalogue essay, Dr. Janson writes, the qualities that set sculpture apart are evident wherever we turn, once we are attuned to them. He notes that sculpture has a longer and more continuous history than painting or architecture; and that "no exhibition devoted to either of those arts could draw upon as many periods and cultures as this one does."

Yet this diversity of origins, he continues, is counterbalanced by an underlying sense of kinship. The same basic themes recur in the most widely separated times and places.

In part, he says, these recurring motifs reflect the fact that sculpture has always been a more public art than painting, hence more closely linked with the established imagery of religious or secular institutions.

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3-traditions and revisions

"Above all, however, what links all sculpture, regardless of the circumstances of its creation, is a common impulse: to introduce into our environment a 'duplicate reality'..."

"Unlike the painter's world, which leaves us forever on the outside looking in," Dr. Janson adds, "sculpture shares our own physical space. We want to see it from all possible angles and at various distances, we have a strong impulse to get the 'feel' of it by touching the surface. In other words, we treat a piece of sculpture as we would a living person if politeness set no limits to our curiosity."

In conjunction with the exhibition, Dr. Janson will offer a series of four evening lectures at the Museum beginning Wednesday, October 1.

Gallery talks on the exhibition also will be offered at 1:30 p.m. September 24 and 28, and October 22 and 26. And on Sunday, September 28 and Sunday, October 26, a brief program, "On Looking at Sculpture," will be screened in the audio-visual center on the classroom level of the Museum.

Traditions and Revisions: Themes from the History of Sculpture has been installed in the special exhibitions gallery on the Museum's first floor. There is no admission charge.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition has been partially funded by a supplementary grant from Case Western Reserve University. Fully illustrated, the publication is available in softbound edition priced at \$5.00.

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